

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are pending in this application. Claims 7-12 were withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement by the Examiner.

Claim rejections

Double Patenting

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 13 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 4-6 and 10-12 of U.S. Patent No. 7,013,691 (Shimoda). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 4-6 and 10-12 of Shimoda recite that the interval between the rollers is controlled based on the temperature of the ring in order to adjust the peripheral length of the ring to the target peripheral length. Shimoda discloses a change in the interval between the rollers as the rolling condition. However, Shimoda does not claim a change in the rolling load, as by contrast is recited in the present claims. Therefore, the present claims are distinct from the claims of Shimoda. Withdrawal of the asserted rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Section 103

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio et al. ("Nishio"), JP 2003033804, in view of Hattori et al. ("Hattori"), JP 63-10033. The Applicant respectfully traverses. The cited references do not support the asserted rejection for at least the reason that they do not disclose or suggest that the rolling load and the tension are controlled based on the measured temperature of the ring and the relation between the temperature of the ring, the rolling load and the tension, as recited in independent claims 1 and 13.

As recognized by the Examiner in the Office Action, Nishio does not disclose a change in a rolling condition. As to Hattori, Hattori discloses that a rolling reduction speed and/or a revolving speed of a work roller is controlled in order to keep a

temperature of a ring within a predetermined temperature range. That is, Hattori discloses that the rolling reduction speed and/or a revolving speed of a work roller is controlled based on the temperature of the ring. Hattori discloses a change in the rolling reduction speed and/or a revolving speed of a work roller as the rolling condition. However, according to the present claims, the rolling condition is a rolling load and a tension. This feature is absent from Hattori. Accordingly, claims 1 and 13 are allowable over Nishio and Hattori, as are claims dependent thereon. Withdrawal of the asserted rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio, in view of Hattori, and further in view of Stahl et al. (US 4,939,920) ("Stahl"). The Applicant respectfully traverses. Claims 3 and 4 depend on claim 1 and are therefore allowable over Nishio and Hattori for at least the reasons discussed above. Stahl does not remedy the deficiencies in Nishio and Hattori. Withdrawal of the asserted rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

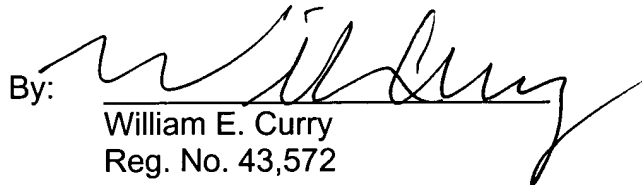
Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4323 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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